

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the specification beginning at page 17, line 1 as follows:

Silicon nitride ceramics in this case are produced ~~by, , mixing~~, by mixing for example, silicon nitride powder of an average particle size of 5 μm or less having 50% or more of alpha ratio of crystallization with 5 to 15 weight % sintering additive powder consisting of at least one of oxides of Al, Mg, Ca or Ti or complex oxides of them of an average particle size of 5 μm or less, forming the mixed powder's so that its relative density is 45% or more, pre-treating in atmospheric air of which temperature is 1,000° C or less, and then sintering the pre-treated green compact in an inert atmosphere until its relative density becomes 99 % or more. In addition, the wear-resistant member and surrounding parts preferably have good heat conductivity, namely at least 10 W/mK or more, for good heat dissipation during sliding movement.